E/CONF.39/D/98
SUMMARY
19 Oct. 1962
ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LESS DEVELOPED AREAS

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Agenda Item: D.3.3

Brazil

THE NECESSITY OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR HEAVY MECHANICAL INDUSTRY AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FREE TRADE

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THE NECESSITY OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR HEAVY MECHANICAL INDUSTRY AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FREE TRADE

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In order to coordinate all efforts and decisions essential to the country's industrial development, a number of Executive Groups were created by the Brazilian Government, to regulate, guide, supervise and encourage all activities in the industrial sectors where the most crucial bottlenecks are felt. The success of this policy is best illustrated by the creation of an automotive industry whose output, starting from nihil in 1956, reached more than 100,000 units in 1961. GEIMAPE is one of the youngest of these groups.

A study done by the Economic Commission for Latin America in 1961, with the participation of GEIMAPE and ABDIB (a private manufacturers' association), revealed that the national demand for heavy equipment in five chosen basic sectors, for the 1961-1970 decade, amounts to an estimated total of US$ 875.3 million, of which approximately 83%, i.e., US$ 725 million could be supplied by the country's industries, provided that certain obstacles be removed. Among these, the lack of proper technical standards assumes extraordinary significance.

The conclusion was reached that the technological progress of basic industry in Brazil has been retarded by two main factors: First, the adaptation of foreign technical know-how to the nation's manufacturing resources, with no concern for its peculiar conditions; Second, the fact that there is no technological unity in the country.

Under such circumstances, technical standards have now become an imperative need.

All attempts to increase the pace of technical standardization to a level compatible with the speed of the nation's industrial expansion have failed to a large extent, due to the lack of organized support of industry as a whole and of financial resources. A new attempt is now being made with the creation of a Special Program, which will develop the most badly needed standards under new working methods. It is believed that this plan will establish new directives for the solution of the standardization problem in Brazil.

However, the international aspect of standardization can only be solved by coordinated international action. This aspect concerns primarily countries like the members of the Latin American Association of Free Trade (ALALC), whose ultimate goal is the pooling of their individual resources for a faster development of the group as a whole. In such a group, technical standards will necessarily play a vital role in the definition of the common market and no country can afford to ignore the others' technical standards, i.e., teir stage of industrial development.

It is at this point, when standardization in the group is either nonexistent or at an incipient stage, that a concerted group action will prove the most effective and beneficial — specially so if sponsored by the United Nations Organization.

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